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Economic and Social Council

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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 9 (a) of the provisional agenda*
National standardization: field collection of names

What can be done when crowdsourcing does not work

Summary**

The report pertains to issues relating to crowdsourcing.

Recently, the gathering of comprehensive and accurate sets of national geographical names has been threatened by the collection of names by means that do not involve fieldwork, in particular digital crowdsourcing.

While digital crowdsourcing projects may succeed in contributing enormously to cultural heritage and history, the collection of geographical names in some countries or areas using this method may not show such successful results when the intention is to gather historical information on the names and when it comes to collecting and promoting minority names. In such cases, crowdsourcing projects often fail to reach the most suitable volunteers: older persons who do not know how to contribute digitally — and are often uninterested in dealing with digital technology — and/or people who have no access at all to such technology. In such cases, fieldwork is the most efficient way to reach these people.

At the same time, it is not possible to ignore the high costs and the large amount of time involved in fieldwork operations, which make this activity difficult or even impossible for national institutions responsible for the collection of geographical names to carry out.

Suggested in the report is the establishment of a partnership between national institutions responsible for the collection of geographical names and educational institutions as an additional means of obtaining information on geographical names in areas where crowdsourcing may fail.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Ana Cristina da Rocha Bérenger Resende, Vania Nagem, Marcia Mathias, Beatriz Souza Pinto, Antônio Jurandir Constantino de Oliveira, José Carlos Corrêa and Américo de Lima Ferreira, Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. The report will be available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/91/CRP.91.

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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
New York, 8-17 August 2017
National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications

Place Names Day and Place Names Bee in Latvia

Summary**

The first Place Names Day in Latvia was held on 20 October 2017. It was held in honour of the 22 years of the Laboratory of Toponymy of the Latvian Geospatial Information Agency. Place Names Day was also devoted to the geographical names of Latvia and their collection, investigation and usage. Some 90 people participated. More detailed information (in Latvian) with photographs is available from www.lgia.gov.lv/lv/Aktualitates/2016/11_novembris/04-1.aspx, and presentations from http://map.lgia.gov.lv/index.php?lang=0&cPath=3&txt_id=116&0&ap=119).

The spirit and ideas of Place Names Day were further developed in 2017. The Latvian National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with the Latvian Language Institute (University of Latvia) and other partners, inspired by Place Names Day, launched an interactive nationwide crowdsourcing of place names, the Place Names Bee (see https://vietvardi.lv/talka/). About 3,000 place names have been collected so far.

The Place Names Bee runs from 23 February to 30 September 2017. On 20 October 2017, the second Place Names Day will be held, with a focus on the results of the Bee.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was compiled by Vita Strautniece (Latvian Geospatial Information Agency) and Sanda Rapa (Latvian Language Institute, University of Latvia). The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/92/CRP.92.

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New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

Report of Madagascar

Summary**

The report concerns the work carried out by Madagascar since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, in particular the international training of trainers on toponymy, held in Antananarivo in 2013, and the development of toponymic guidelines.

The Government of Madagascar is aware of the importance of standardizing geographical names, especially for national sovereignty. It therefore intends to participate effectively in the various activities of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, in particular the implementation of the Gaborone action plan of 2011 on geographical names in Africa and the development of toponymic guidelines. Similar activities have been carried out in other countries, such as Tunisia in 2007, Burkina Faso in 2008, Kenya in 2009 and Cameroon in 2010.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Nivo Ratovoarison (Madagascar), Secretary, National Committee on Geographical Names. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the languages of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/93/CRP.93.

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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*
Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language names)

Sami place names on road signs

Summary**

The report provides an update on place names in the Sami language. It is noted that the Sami Parliament of Norway has repeatedly pointed out the lack of implementation of the relevant legislation. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration has, however, now decided to erect signs featuring place names in Sami.

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* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Lisa Monica Aslaksen, Sami Parliament of Norway. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/94/CRP.94.

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